



Kia Tū Pakari ai Tātou

He Pitopito Kōrero

Combined Tangata Whenua Forum ePānui

SmartGrowth update – January 2026

Tēnā koutou katoa

Ngā hua nui o te tau hou tauiwi ki a koutou. Ko te manako ia, nā te wā whakatā i whakahaumanu, i whakaora ake koutou, nō reira tēnei te mihi nui ki a koutou. Tēnā koutou katoa.

Season's greetings from the Tū Pakari team, and a Happy New Year! We hope you had a wonderful and restful Christmas break with whānau and friends.

There are significant growth and development issues mana whenua need to review and progress this year, which will require us to strategically adapt and respond to the evolving operating environment, local infrastructure, WBOP city and regional deal, resource management and local government reforms, and a general election later in the year to name a few.

We look forward to working with you all this year!

Ara Rau Tāngata

The Ara Rau Tāngata Conference was held on 28 November 2025 at the University of Waikato – Tauranga campus, bringing together Māori Land Trusts and marae from across the subregion.

The keynote address was delivered by Helmut Modlik, CEO of Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Toa Rangatira, who spoke about the enduring impacts of raupatu, colonisation, and environmental degradation, while highlighting the iwi's strategic focus over the past decade on restoring mana, wellbeing, and prosperity through iwi-led development and its housing programme, Te Āhuru Mōwai: Homes for Whānau.

Key themes included tikanga-based planning, holistic wellbeing models, iwi housing initiatives, and innovative infrastructure solutions, particularly sustainable wastewater treatment partnerships with international providers.

Other presentations showcased local papakāinga developments (Ngāti Te Wai), Māori Land Court processes and services, funding pathways through the BOP Housing Equity Fund, and technical guidance on structure planning and infrastructure delivery.

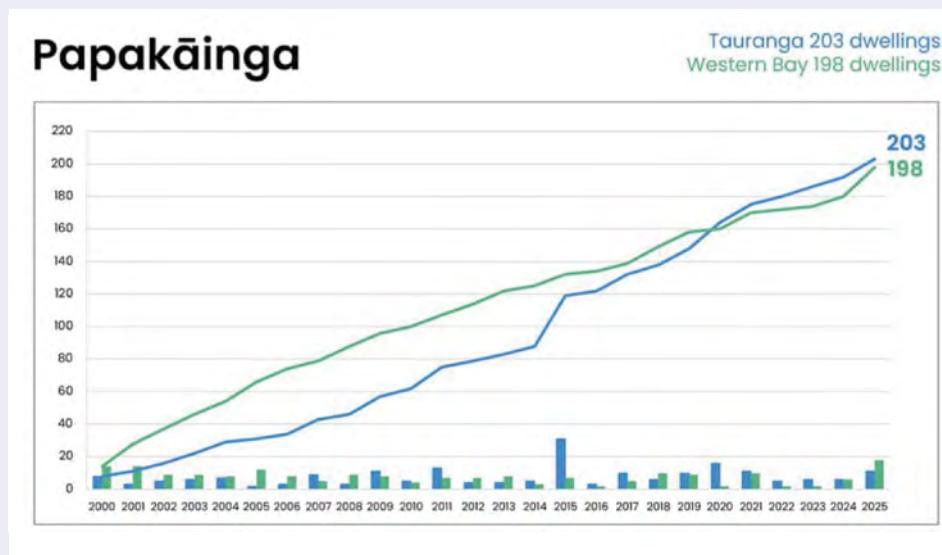
Development trends on Māori Land

The Development Trends Report is produced annually by the SmartGrowth partners for the subregion. It contains subdivision, residential and non-residential development and population trends for the subregion, including Tauranga City and Western Bay of Plenty District.

The partner Councils collect the development statistics as part of the monitoring requirements under the Resource Management Act 1991, SmartGrowth, Bay of Plenty Regional Policy Statement, and the National Policy Statement on Urban Development.

On 16 Dec 2024, SLG agreed for “additional monitoring of development of housing on Māori land be added to the annual reporting.”

On 15 Dec 2025, SLG received the 2025 Development Trends Report which included the following cumulative data on the number of homes consented on Māori land i.e. papakāinga dwellings since 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2025.



You can read the full report here (page 73)

Outcomes Performance Measures Framework

On 10 December 2025, the CTWF agreed in principle to the Outcomes Performance Measures Framework (OPMF) as reported, subject to Te Rōpū Arotahi (TRA) making the final adjustments required to prepare the OPMF for pilot commencement in 2026.

The OPMF has now been finalised, and this version will be reported back to the CTWF at the first meeting of 2026 (date to be confirmed) along with Tauranga City Council's and Western Bay of Plenty District Council's monitoring and reporting plans.

City Regional Deal (“CRD”)

Tū Pakari worked alongside the City and Regional Deal (CRD) negotiation team to deliver two wānanga focused on exploring economic, social, cultural, and Māori land opportunities for tāngata whenua.

The first wānanga was held at the Merivale Community Centre on Tuesday, 18 November, followed by a second session at the Orchard Church in Te Puke on Tuesday, 25 November. Each wānanga brought together ten tāngata whenua representatives to engage directly with the negotiation team and discuss potential opportunities that could benefit marae, hapū, iwi, and Māori land trusts.

The workshops provided a valuable opportunity to strategically explore both economic and non-economic outcomes, including Māori housing and papakāinga, long-term social infrastructure, community services, employment pathways, and progressive procurement for Māori businesses.

The next phases of the CRD process were outlined below at the December CTWF hui by the Negotiation team:



RM Reform

Consultation on legislation to replace the Resource Management Act 1991 (RMA) is well underway. In March 2025, the Government announced its intention to replace the RMA with two new laws, expected to be introduced on 9 December 2025 and enacted before the 2026 general election.

- **The Natural Environment Bill** – focused on managing the use, protection, and enhancement of the natural environment. This includes land, air, freshwater, coastal and marine water, and other natural resources.
- **The Planning Bill** – focuses on land-use planning and regulation. It will enable the urban and infrastructure development that New Zealand needs and align with the Government’s Going for Housing Growth plan and the 30-year National Infrastructure Plan.



You can read more info on the RM Reform [here](#).

We encourage you to [**make a submission on these two bills here**](#).

The closing date for submissions is 4.30pm on Friday, 13 February 2026.

Marae as Centres Implementation Framework

In preparation for the introduction of Regional Spatial Plans (RSPs) under the proposed Planning Bill in 2026, and to proactively strengthen tāngata whenua positioning in Māori land-use planning and decision-making, work is underway to expand on the SmartGrowth Strategy's transformational shift – Marae as Centres and Opportunities for Whenua Māori – through the development of the Marae as Centres Implementation Framework (MAC).

The intent of this work for the Forum is to move this transformational shift from strategic direction into implementation and delivery, ensuring that commitments made at the strategic level (SmartGrowth Strategy) result in coordinated investment, infrastructure delivery, alignment with the TCC and WBOP commercial centres work that ensures meaningful on-the-ground change that realises Māori growth and development outcomes (as outlined in the OPMF).

The intended benefits of this framework will inform updates to both the Future Development Strategy (FDS) and any future Regional Spatial Plan (RSP), as well as future district and city plan changes.

It will help define the future role and function of marae as key centres supporting well-functioning urban environments and ensure that marae centres across the sub-region evolve in a coordinated way that supports social, cultural, environmental, and economic outcomes for tangata whenua.



You can read the project brief here (page 46).

Simplifying Local Government

The Government has announced two proposals that would fundamentally change local government. The first proposal is to replace elected regional councillors with new Combined Territories Boards made up of mayors from the region's city and district councils.

The second proposal is for each Combined Territories Boards to prepare a regional reorganisation plan within two years of establishment. These plans would assess how councils across a region can best work together to deliver efficient and effective local infrastructure, public services, and regulatory functions.

Consultation on these proposals is open now until Friday 20 February 2026. Legislation is anticipated to be introduced by mid-2026 and finalised in 2027.



Read the proposals here

We encourage you to [make a submission on these two proposals here](#).

Tangata Whenua representation

Te Ihu o te Waka o Te Arawa appointed Hākopa Tapiata as an interim representative to the SmartGrowth Leadership Group (SLG), pending the matter being formally placed on an Council agenda and progressed through WBOPDC processes.

What's coming up

2026 CTWF hui

Email invitations will be sent out to members in due course.

- 4 March 2026
- 12 May 2026
- 23 July 2026
- 30 September 2026
- 2 December 2026



This e-pānui is a way of keeping tāngata whenua connected to the Combined Tāngata Whenua Forum (CTWF) and the many projects associated with SmartGrowth.

Feel free to share this e-pānui with your whānau, hapū, marae committees, iwi and wider networks.

If you'd like to know more about what's happening in the wider SmartGrowth Urban Growth Partnership you can read their latest newsletter found [here](#).



SmartGrowth
Building our futures together

smartgrowthbop.org.nz

An urban growth partnership involving Bay of Plenty Regional Council, Tauranga City Council, Western Bay of Plenty District Council, tāngata whenua and central government. The purpose of SmartGrowth is to take a collaborative and coordinated approach to managing and shaping growth within the western Bay of Plenty sub-region.